

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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ATHENS PLEASE PASS USIS KAVALA USIS RHODES

FOLLOWING REPEAT BEIRUT 7611 ACTION SECSTATE INFO ALGIERS

AMMAN BAGHDAD BONN BRUSSELS CAIRO COPENHAGEN DAMASCUS THEHAGUE

HERUSALEM JIDDA KUWAIT LONDON OSLO PARIS ROME STOCKHOLM

TEL AVIV TRIPOLI JUN 17

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 7611

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, PLO, XF, XG

SUBJECT: LEBANON-ISRAEL CONTRETEMPS/PRESAGE PALESTINIAN CAMPAIGN
TO TORPEDO SETTLEMENT MOVES

REF: (A) BEIRUT 7377; (B) BEIRUT 7506 (NOTAL)

1. WEEKEND UPSURGE OF INCIDENTS AT VARIOUS POINTS ALONG LEBANESE-
ISRAELI FRONTIER APPARENTLY KICKED OFF BY FEDAYEEN RAID MORNING
JUNE 15 ON ISRAELI UPPER GALILEE SETTLEMENT OF KFAR YUVAL
(SLIGHTLY NORT OF QIRYAT SHIMONA). IRAQI-SPONSORED ARAB LIBERATION
FRONT (ALF), MINOR FEDAYEEN OUTFIT ASSOCIATED WITH "REJECTIONISTS",
CLAIMED CREDIT FOR ATTACK IN WHICH, TO BEST WE CAN DETERMINE,
ALL FOUR ATTACKERS (ONLY ONE OF WHOM WAS PALESTINIAN) AND TWO
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ISRAELIS KILLED. PLO, FAR FROM DISPUTING ALF CLAIM OF RESPONSI-

BILITY, HAS ENDORSED OPERATION.

2. IN APPARENT RESPONSE TO FEDAYEEN ATTACK, ISRAELI AIRCRAFT LAUNCHED SORTIES FROM 0855 TO 1135 LOCAL JUNE 15 IN VICINITY OF LEBANESE VILLAGE OF KFAR SHOUBA, SITE OF LARGE-SCALE ISRAELI SHELLING LAST JANUARY. GOL ARMY SOURCES STATE ISRAELIS MADE FIVE AIR ATTACKS AT HIGH ALTITUDE, WHICH RESULTED IN ONE LEBANESE KILLED, TWO MISSING AND THREE WOUNDED. GOL AUTHORITIES BELIEVE THAT NO MORE THAN 100-150 LEBANESE VILLAGERS RETURNED TO KFAR SHOUBA FOLLOWING SHELLING AREA TOOK EARLIER THIS YEAR. LEBANESE ARMY SOURCES UNABLE POSITIVELY IDENTIFY AIRCRAFT USED BY IAF IN ATTACKS, BUT BELIEVE THAT PHANTOMS INVOLVED. THEY DISCOUNT PALESTINIAN CLAIM THAT ONE ISRAELI AIRCRAFT DOWNED DURING STRIKES.

3. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS RE RESULTING LEBANESE-ISRAELI EXCHANGES OF ARTILLERY FIRE IS DIFFICULT TO ESTABLISH. LEBANESE MILITARY SOURCE REPORTS THAT ISRAELI ARTILLERY INITIATED SHELLING OF IMPORTANT SOUTHERN LEBANESE TOWN OF NABATIYYEH AT 0020 LOCAL JUNE 16 AND 17 RPT 17 ROUNDS FELL IN TOWN CENTER, WOUNDING SEVEN PERSONS. THERE ARE CONFLICTING REPORTS FROM LEBANESE OFFICIAL SOURCES REGARDING REPORTED RESUMPTION OF SHELLING OF NABATIYYEH AT MID-MORNING JUNE 16, WITH SOME OFFICIALS REPORTING SHELLING STILL CONTINUING AND OTHER DENYING THAT IT HAS RESUMED. LOCAL PRESS MORNING JUNE 16 REPORTS FIRING YESTERDAY AFTERNOON OF ROCKETS FROM LEBANESE TERRITORY IN AREA NAHARIYYEH, BUT LEBANESE ARMY UNABLE PROVIDE ANY DETAILS.

4. COMMENT: PALESTINIAN RAID, WHICH SET OFF PRESENT SPIRAL OF CLASHES, WAS NOT RPT NOT UNEXPECTED (REFTELS). FACT THAT IS WAS NEAR-DORMANT ALF WHICH APPARENTLY PULLED OFF ATTACK, HOWEVER, COULD NOT HAVE BEEN PREDICTED. WHAT IS INTERESTING IN PALESTINIAN REACTION IS EXTENT TO WHICH PLO, INCLUDING SO-CALLED "MODERATES", HAVE RALLIED AROUND TO APPLAUD ALF ACTION. COMING ON HEELS OF RECENT PILGRIMAGE TO TRIPOLI, THIS REACTION TENDS TO CONFIRM OUR PREVIOUSLY REPORTED IMPRESSION THAT MOST ELEMENTS UNDER PLO UMBRELLA, INCLUDING FATAH, ARE MOVING TOWARD UNITY OF VIEW ON NEED TO COMBAT WHAT THEY REGARD AS TREND TOWARD POLITICAL SETTLEMENT WHICH WILL IGNORE OR HARM PALESTINIAN INTERESTS.

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5. IN INCREASINGLY SUPERCHARGED ATMOSPHERE WITHIN PALESTINIAN CIRCLES, 'ARAFAT AND HIS "MODERATE" COHORTS MAY BE INCREASINGLY HARD-PRESSED TO AVOID TAKING PART IN ESCALATION OF "STRUGGLE" POLICY DESIGNED TO HEAD OFF WHAT THEY SEE AS CONTINUING UNFAVORABLE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS. WHILE 'ARAFAT MAY BE JUST AS WILLING TO SEE "REJECTIONISTS" BLEED THEMSELVES DRY BY CARRYING BRUNT OF ESCALATION, HE IS UNLIKELY TO FEEL ABLE TO STAND ALOOF FROM GROWING PALESTINIAN DEMAND FOR MILITARY ACTION. WE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED

TO SEE, THEREFORE, FATAH ENTER THE LISTS WITH ANOTHER OPERATION
A LA SAVOY HOTEL AIMED AT REVALIDATING ITS MILITANT CREDENTIALS.
REMARKS OF MAJED ABU SHARAR OF FATAH IN TRIPOLI (REFTEL B)
CERTAINLY POINTS IN THIS DIRECTION.

6. AS ESCALATION OF PALESTINIAN EMOTIONS AND ACTIVITIES CONTINUES,
THERE IS INCREASING CHANCE THAT OPERATIONS WILL EXPAND BEYOND
MIDDLE EAST. WE SEE POSSIBILITY THAT PALESTINIANS, PROBABLY
REPRESENTING "REJECTION FRONT", WILL SEEK OPPORTUNITIES FOR
EXTRA-AREA "SPECTACULARS" IN NEAR FUTURE. IN THIS CONNECTION,
RELIABLE LEBANESE OBSERVER, WHO HAS GOOD SOURCES WITHIN PLO,
TOLD US JUNE 16 TO "WATCH EUROPE." HE HAS NO RPT NO DETAILS
RE PROJECTED OPERATIONS THERE, BUT CLEARLY FEELS THAT PLANNING
IS UNDERWAY. GODLEY UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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